

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL SUMMONS

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Council of the Borough of Rotherham will be held at the Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham, on Wednesday, 2nd March, 2011 at 2.00 p.m.

AGENDA

1. To submit for approval the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 2nd February, 2011 - Pages 47A to 54A (Section A)
2. To consider any communication received by the Mayor or the Chief Executive and to pass a resolution or resolutions thereon.
3. To consider any questions from the Public.
4. To receive and consider reports, minutes and recommendations of the Standards Committee - Pages 19B to 21B (Section B)
5. To receive a report from the Leader and to consider reports, minutes and recommendations of the Cabinet - Pages 115C to 133C (Section C) including the following recommendations to Council:-

Sheffield City Region Transport Strategy (2011-2026) and South Yorkshire LTP Implementation Plan (2011-2015) (Minute No. C162) (Page 118C)

Proposed Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2011/12 (Minute No. C169) (Pages 122C - 124C)

Capital Programme Budget 2011/12 - 2013/14 (Minute No. C170) (Pages 124C - 125C)

Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2011/12 - 2013/14 (Minute No. C171) (Page 126C)

6. Council Tax - Aggregate Figures following Joint Authority Precepts (report herewith)

7. To consider the following reports of meetings of Cabinet Members:-

Safeguarding and Developing Learning Opportunities for Children - Pages 69D to 72D (Section D)

Community Development, Equality and Young Peoples Issues - Pages 33E to 35E (Section E)

Culture, Lifestyle, Sport and Tourism – Pages 37F to 40F (Section F)

Regeneration and Environment – Pages 76G to 84G (Section G)

Adult Independence Health and Well Being – Pages 57H to 63H (Section H)

Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods – Pages 64J to 70J (Section J)

Resources and Commissioning – Pages 36K to 39K (Section K)

Town Centres– Pages 27L to 31L (Section L)

Deputy Leader and Organisational Change and Governance – Pages 17N to 20N (Section N)

8. To receive and consider reports, minutes and recommendations of the Licensing Board - Pages 20Q to 22Q (Section Q)
9. To receive and consider reports, minutes and recommendations of the Planning Board - Pages 223T to 240T (Section T)
10. To put questions, if any, to Cabinet Members and Chairmen (or their representatives) under Standing Order No. 7(1) and 7(3).
11. To put questions, if any, to the designated Members on the discharge of functions of the South Yorkshire Police Authority, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority, South Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority and South Yorkshire Pensions Authority, in accordance with Standing Order No. 7(5).
12. Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel - copy herewith
13. To determine any item which the Mayor is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency

T. C. MUMFORD

Assistant Chief Executive, Legal and Democratic Services

22nd February, 2011

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO COUNCIL
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1)	Meeting:	Council
2)	Date:	02 March 2011
3)	Title:	Setting the Council Tax for 2011/12
4)	Directorate:	Financial Services

5. Summary

This report sets out details of the calculation of the Council Tax for Rotherham both for parished areas and unparished areas for the financial year 2011/12, and includes both the Police and Fire and Rescue Authority precepts.

6 Recommendations**That Council:**

- **Approve this report;**
- **Approve a net revenue budget for the Council in 2011/12 of £219.622m, which after receipt of £2.316m estimated Council Tax Freeze Grant leaves £217.306m to be funded;**
- **Approve the calculation of the amounts set out in section 7.3 for the year 2011/12 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992;**
- **Note that the major precepting Authorities (The South Yorkshire Police Authority and the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority) have stated the amounts in section 7.4 in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992; and**
- **Resolve that the Council sets the amounts presented in section 7.5 as its Council Tax (including South Yorkshire Police and Fire and Rescue Authority Precepts) for the year 2011/12.**

7 Proposals and Details

7.1 Background

7.1.1 In accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council must set a Council Tax for the financial year 2011/12 prior to 11th March 2011. It must set Council Taxes for both the parished and unparished areas of the Borough for each Council Tax Band A to H, taking into account the precepts from the South Yorkshire Police and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authorities.

7.1.2 Members have previously considered the 2011/12 Budget at a meeting of the Cabinet on 23rd February 2011. The Council Tax Base for parished and unparished areas was agreed at the Cabinet meeting held on 19th January 2011.

7.1.3 Council Tax Freeze Grant - the Government has introduced a new un-ring-fenced grant payable to authorities setting their basic Council Tax for 2011/12 at a level which is no more than the basic amount of Council Tax for 2010/11. The grant will be equivalent to a 2.5% increase in 2010/11 tax multiplied by the tax base for 2011/12. The grant will be payable to billing authorities like the Council and to major precepting authorities such as the South Yorkshire Police and Fire and Rescue Authorities but local precepting authorities, such as town and parish councils will not be eligible. In Rotherham's case the estimated grant is £2,315,888, which has been taken into account in determining the Council's Net Revenue Budget in the Council Tax calculations.

7.1.4 It is now necessary to agree the Council's net Revenue Budget of £217,306,112 for 2011/12 after allowing for Specific Grants and other income and Balances which will be financed as follows:-

	£
Formula Grant as notified in the Revenue Support Grant Settlement	123,170,144
Collection Fund Surplus	1,500,462
Which will leave	92,635,506
To be raised from Council Tax (which equates to a freeze in the Council Tax levied in 2010/11 allowing the Council to qualify for the Government's Council Tax Freeze grant)	

7.1.5 The Council has received details of the Police and Fire and Rescue Authority precepts and also the precepts from the Parish Councils and Parish Meetings. It should be noted that a new Parish of Hellaby has been created with effect from April 2011 and is now included in the following tables. Accordingly, Members are asked to approve the financing of the Council's Budget (as reported in section 7.1.4 of this report) and to pass a resolution as follows:-

7.2 Tax Base

That it be noted that, at its meeting on 19 January 2011, Minute C150, the Cabinet calculated the following amounts for the year 2011/12 in accordance with regulations made under Section 33 (5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-

- (a) **75,311.58** being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax Base for the year;
- (b) Part of the Council's Area

	Band D Equivalent Properties
Anston	3,027.95
Aston-cum-Aughton	4,568.22
Bramley	2,387.07
Brampton Bierlow	1,276.13
Brinsworth	2,435.77
Catcliffe	572.88
Dalton	2,896.91
Dinnington St. John's	2,589.03
Firbeck	135.02
Gildingwells	41.71
Harthill with Woodall	667.36
Hellaby	256.76
Hooton Levitt	55.10
Hooton Roberts	81.38
Laughton-en-le-Morthen	464.05
Letwell	61.40
Maltby	4,694.90
Orgreave	215.73
Ravenfield	1,055.56
Thorpe Salvin	202.54
Thrybergh	1,094.16
Thurcroft	1,966.09
Todwick	650.48
Treeton	870.28
Ulley	64.21
Wales	2,141.66

Wentworth	583.36
Whiston	1,640.95
Wickersley	2,712.99
Woodsetts	623.32

7.3 Rotherham M.B.C. Council Tax for Parished and Unparished Areas
(N.B. Excluding Police and Fire Precepts)

The following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2011/12 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-

- (a) £219,463,593 being the amount calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32 (4) of the Act. (*The Council's and Parishes' spending less the amount financed from balances and the new Council Tax Freeze Grant*).
- (b) £124,670,606 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates and revenue support grant, increased by the amount of the sum which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in accordance with Section 97 (3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1998 and increased by the amount of any sum which the Council estimates will be transferred from its Collection Fund to its General Fund pursuant to the Collection Fund (Community Charges) directions under Section 98 (4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, made on 7 February 1994. (*Government Formula Grant plus the Collection Fund surplus*).
- (c) £1,258.6774 being the amount at 7.3 (a) above less the amount at 7.3 (b) above, all divided by the amount at 7.2(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33 (1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year. (*Average Council Tax including Parishes*).
- (d) £ 2,157,481 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34 (1) of the Act. (*Total Parish Precepts*).
- (e) £1,230.0300 being the amount of 7.3 (c) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 7.3 (d) above by the amount at 7.2 (a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates. (*Rotherham MBC Council Tax*).

(f) Part of the Council's Area

	Band D £-pp
Anston	1,315.90
Aston-cum-Aughton	1,279.06
Bramley	1,263.96
Brampton Bierlow	1,281.75
Brinsworth	1,301.07
Catcliffe	1,315.65
Dalton	1,274.91
Dinnington St.John's	1,285.26
Firbeck	1,257.80
Gildingwells	1,230.03
Harthill with Woodall	1,293.03
Hellaby	1,263.08
Hooton Levitt	1,230.03
Hooton Roberts	1,236.17
Laughton-en-le- Morthen	1,278.32
Letwell	1,255.67
Maltby	1,270.93
Orgreave	1,260.16
Ravenfield	1,267.92
Thorpe Salvin	1,270.15
Thrybergh	1,294.01
Thurcroft	1,294.47
Todwick	1,282.91
Treeton	1,289.78
Ulley	1,329.08
Wales	1,304.44
Wentworth	1,245.46
Whiston	1,268.61
Wickersley	1,277.49
Woodsetts	1,319.99

being the amounts (rounded to the nearest penny) given by adding to the amount at 7.3 (e) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the Council Tax base relating to that part of the Council's area, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34 (3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate. (*Parish Council Taxes*).

(g)

Part of the Council's Area	Band A £-pp	Band B £-pp	Band C £-pp	Band D £-pp	Band E £-pp	Band F £-pp	Band G £-pp	Band H £-pp
Anston	877.26	1,023.48	1,169.69	1,315.90	1,608.32	1,900.74	2,193.16	2,631.79
Aston-cum-Aughton	852.71	994.83	1,136.95	1,279.06	1,563.30	1,847.54	2,131.77	2,558.13
Bramley	842.64	983.08	1,123.52	1,263.96	1,544.84	1,825.72	2,106.60	2,527.93
Brampton Bierlow	854.50	996.92	1,139.33	1,281.75	1,566.58	1,851.42	2,136.25	2,563.50
Brinsworth	867.38	1,011.94	1,156.51	1,301.07	1,590.20	1,879.33	2,168.45	2,602.14
Catcliffe	877.10	1,023.28	1,169.47	1,315.65	1,608.02	1,900.38	2,192.75	2,631.30
Dalton	849.94	991.59	1,133.25	1,274.91	1,558.22	1,841.53	2,124.84	2,549.81
Dinnington St. John's	856.84	999.65	1,142.46	1,285.26	1,570.88	1,856.49	2,142.11	2,570.53
Firbeck	838.54	978.29	1,118.05	1,257.80	1,537.32	1,816.83	2,096.34	2,515.61
Gildingwells	820.02	956.69	1,093.36	1,230.03	1,503.37	1,776.71	2,050.05	2,460.06
Harthill with Woodall	862.02	1,005.69	1,149.36	1,293.03	1,580.37	1,867.72	2,155.06	2,586.07
Hellaby	842.05	982.40	1,122.74	1,263.08	1,543.76	1,824.45	2,105.13	2,526.16
Hooton Levitt	820.02	956.69	1,093.36	1,230.03	1,503.37	1,776.71	2,050.05	2,460.06
Hooton Roberts	824.12	961.47	1,098.82	1,236.17	1,510.88	1,785.58	2,060.29	2,472.35
Laughton-en-le-Morthen	852.21	994.25	1,136.28	1,278.32	1,562.39	1,846.46	2,130.53	2,556.64
Letwell	837.11	976.63	1,116.15	1,255.67	1,534.70	1,813.74	2,092.78	2,511.33
Maltby	847.29	988.50	1,129.72	1,270.93	1,553.36	1,835.79	2,118.22	2,541.87
Orgreave	840.11	980.12	1,120.14	1,260.16	1,540.20	1,820.23	2,100.27	2,520.32
Ravenfield	845.28	986.16	1,127.04	1,267.92	1,549.69	1,831.45	2,113.21	2,535.85
Thorpe Salvin	846.76	987.89	1,129.02	1,270.15	1,552.40	1,834.65	2,116.91	2,540.29
Thrybergh	862.67	1,006.45	1,150.23	1,294.01	1,581.56	1,869.12	2,156.68	2,588.01
Thurcroft	862.98	1,006.81	1,150.64	1,294.47	1,582.13	1,869.79	2,157.45	2,588.95
Todwick	855.28	997.82	1,140.37	1,282.91	1,568.01	1,853.10	2,138.19	2,565.83
Treeton	859.85	1,003.16	1,146.47	1,289.78	1,576.40	1,863.02	2,149.63	2,579.56
Ulley	886.05	1,033.73	1,181.40	1,329.08	1,624.43	1,919.78	2,215.13	2,658.16
Wales	869.63	1,014.57	1,159.51	1,304.44	1,594.32	1,884.20	2,174.07	2,608.89
Wentworth	830.31	968.69	1,107.07	1,245.46	1,522.23	1,798.99	2,075.76	2,490.92
Whiston	845.74	986.70	1,127.66	1,268.61	1,550.53	1,832.44	2,114.36	2,537.23
Wickersley	851.66	993.60	1,135.54	1,277.49	1,561.37	1,845.26	2,129.14	2,554.97
Woodsetts	879.99	1,026.66	1,173.32	1,319.99	1,613.32	1,906.65	2,199.98	2,639.97
All Other Parts	820.02	956.69	1,093.36	1,230.03	1,503.37	1,776.71	2,050.05	2,460.06

being the amounts (rounded to the nearest penny) given by multiplying the amounts at 7.3 (e) and 7.3 (f) above by the number which, in proportion set out in Section 5 (1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36 (1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

7.4 South Yorkshire Police Authority and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority Precepts

That it be noted that, for the year 2011/12 the major precepting Authorities have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Valuation Bands

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£ pp	£ pp	£ pp	£ pp	£ pp	£ pp	£ pp	£ pp
South Yorkshire Police Authority	88.22	102.92	117.63	132.33	161.74	191.14	220.55	264.66
South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority	40.11	46.80	53.48	60.17	73.54	86.91	100.28	120.34

7.5 Council Tax for Parished and Unparished Areas (including Police and Fire Precepts)

Having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 7.3 (g) and 7.4 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2011/12 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
	£-pp	£-pp	£-pp	£-pp	£-pp	£-pp	£-pp	£-pp
Part of the Council's Area								
Anston	1,005.59	1,173.20	1,340.80	1,508.40	1,843.60	2,178.79	2,513.99	3,016.79
Aston-cum-Aughton	981.04	1,144.55	1,308.06	1,471.56	1,798.58	2,125.59	2,452.60	2,943.13
Bramley	970.97	1,132.80	1,294.63	1,456.46	1,780.12	2,103.77	2,427.43	2,912.93
Brampton Bierlow	982.83	1,146.64	1,310.44	1,474.25	1,801.86	2,129.47	2,457.08	2,948.50
Brinsworth	995.71	1,161.66	1,327.62	1,493.57	1,825.48	2,157.38	2,489.28	2,987.14
Catcliffe	1,005.43	1,173.00	1,340.58	1,508.15	1,843.30	2,178.43	2,513.58	3,016.30
Dalton	978.27	1,141.31	1,304.36	1,467.41	1,793.50	2,119.58	2,445.67	2,934.81
Dinnington St. John's	985.17	1,149.37	1,313.57	1,477.76	1,806.16	2,134.54	2,462.94	2,955.53
Firbeck	966.87	1,128.01	1,289.16	1,450.30	1,772.60	2,094.88	2,417.17	2,900.61
Gildingwells	948.35	1,106.41	1,264.47	1,422.53	1,738.65	2,054.76	2,370.88	2,845.06
Harthill with Woodall	990.35	1,155.41	1,320.47	1,485.53	1,815.65	2,145.77	2,475.89	2,971.07
Hellaby	970.38	1,132.12	1,293.85	1,455.58	1,779.04	2,102.50	2,425.96	2,911.16
Hooton Levitt	948.35	1,106.41	1,264.47	1,422.53	1,738.65	2,054.76	2,370.88	2,845.06
Hooton Roberts	952.45	1,111.19	1,269.93	1,428.67	1,746.16	2,063.63	2,381.12	2,857.35
Laughton-en-le-Morthen	980.54	1,143.97	1,307.39	1,470.82	1,797.67	2,124.51	2,451.36	2,941.64
Letwell	965.44	1,126.35	1,287.26	1,448.17	1,769.98	2,091.79	2,413.61	2,896.33
Maltby	975.62	1,138.22	1,300.83	1,463.43	1,788.64	2,113.84	2,439.05	2,926.87
Orgreave	968.44	1,129.84	1,291.25	1,452.66	1,775.48	2,098.28	2,421.10	2,905.32
Ravenfield	973.61	1,135.88	1,298.15	1,460.42	1,784.97	2,109.50	2,434.04	2,920.85
Thorpe Salvin	975.09	1,137.61	1,300.13	1,462.65	1,787.68	2,112.70	2,437.74	2,925.29
Thrybergh	991.00	1,156.17	1,321.34	1,486.51	1,816.84	2,147.17	2,477.51	2,973.01
Thurcroft	991.31	1,156.53	1,321.75	1,486.97	1,817.41	2,147.84	2,478.28	2,973.95
Todwick	983.61	1,147.54	1,311.48	1,475.41	1,803.29	2,131.15	2,459.02	2,950.83

Treeton	988.18	1,152.88	1,317.58	1,482.28	1,811.68	2,141.07	2,470.46	2,964.56
Ulley	1,014.38	1,183.45	1,352.51	1,521.58	1,859.71	2,197.83	2,535.96	3,043.16
Wales	997.96	1,164.29	1,330.62	1,496.94	1,829.60	2,162.25	2,494.90	2,993.89
Wentworth	958.64	1,118.41	1,278.18	1,437.96	1,757.51	2,077.04	2,396.59	2,875.92
Whiston	974.07	1,136.42	1,298.77	1,461.11	1,785.81	2,110.49	2,435.19	2,922.23
Wickersley	979.99	1,143.32	1,306.65	1,469.99	1,796.65	2,123.31	2,449.97	2,939.97
Woodsetts	1,008.32	1,176.38	1,344.43	1,512.49	1,848.60	2,184.70	2,520.81	3,024.97
All Other Parts	948.35	1,106.41	1,264.47	1,422.53	1,738.65	2,054.76	2,370.88	2,845.06

8 Finance

There are no direct costs arising from this report, however the Council Tax represents a significant element of the Council's resources for the coming financial year.

9 Risks and Uncertainties

As stated in the Cabinet Report on the Proposed Revenue Budget and Council Tax for 2011/12 of 23rd February 2011, although all budgets involve risks, the Council's budget process has been reviewed and redesigned to minimise the incidence and impact of any budget risks.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The setting of the Council Tax as a significant part of the Council's resources is essential in underpinning all parts of the Council's activities.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- Section 84 of the Local Government Act 2003
- Council Tax Base Report to Cabinet of 19th January 2011.
- Local Authorities (Alteration of Requisite Calculations) (England) Regulations 2011.
- Proposed Revenue Budget and Council Tax - Report to Cabinet on 23rd February 2011.
- South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority Precept Notification letter 21st February 2011
- South Yorkshire Police Authority Precept Notification letter 18th February 2011

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ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL****March, 2011****Present:-**

Alan Tolhurst (Rotherham NHS) (in the Chair)
Rev. David Bliss (Vicar of Rotherham)
Nick Cragg (Rotherham Chamber)
Elaine Woodhams (Further Education Sector)

Janet Waggott (Chief Executive of Ryedale District Council) acted as Independent Facilitator.

The Panel received a report and advice from Mr. Tim Mumford, Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) and Mr. Lewis South, Democratic Services Manager.

1. Introduction

The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations, 2003 require an Independent Panel to review remuneration and pensions for Elected Members of Local Authorities.

The above-named Panel met on 18th and 26th January, 2011 to consider and review the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme and to make any recommendations for change on:-

- Basic Allowance.
- Travel and Subsistence.
- Special Responsibility Allowances.
- C-opted Members.

2. Basic Allowances

Consideration was given to the present Basic Allowance of £12,271 and comparisons were made with other Local Authorities, to the role of the Councillor and to the present downturn in the economic climate.

The Panel welcomed the inclusion of all costs for travel and subsistence within the Borough in the basic allowance and the ease of administration that this allowed.

Reference was made to the need to add some sort of factor for inflation in the future, whether it be the Retail Price Index or matching the Local Government Salary Award or if there was a need to consider any possible increase at all in the near future.

The Panel referred to the wider role of the Councillor in the community, their responsibilities and activities and the many and varied tasks undertaken by Councillors.

Discussion took place on the attendance at meetings at the Town Hall. It was noted that some Councillors were not good attendees at meetings. Arrangements for meetings were not seen as conducive to good attendance, including the lack of the need for formal apologies to be made.

The Panel welcomed the position that many Councillors clearly gave a commitment to their role and could evidence their activity. However, the Council should consider if the decision-making process provided 'Value for Money' and if all Councillors were undertaking an effective part.

Possibly, there were barriers preventing Councillors fulfilling their role, such as the starting time of meetings or meeting venues or there being too many meetings.

The Panel noted that some public bodies, local authorities and politicians had voluntarily agreed a reduction in their overall costs.

The arrangements for pensions were noted.

3. Special Responsibility Allowances

The Panel reviewed each Special Responsibility Allowance paid, including the job role, the level of activity and the responsibilities undertaken by each position together with comparators from other local authorities.

With regard to the Leader of the Council, the Panel felt that the allowance was less than it could be given the significant responsibility and commitment that the post demanded. If the financial climate had been better consideration would have been given to recommending an increase.

The operation of the Strong Leader/Cabinet style was noted.

The Panel felt that there could possibly be more parity between the role of Deputy Leader and the role of Leader of the Opposition. These allowances had been set some time ago and possibly did not reflect the position now. For example, there were three Members of the Opposition in 1999 whereas today there are nine Conservative, three Independent and one BNP. The Panel asked that consideration be given as to whether the time was now right to consider narrowing the differential between these two positions.

The Chairman of the Planning Board was thought to be a particularly active position of considerable challenge. If the financial climate had been better consideration would have been given to recommending an increase.

The Panel discussed the role of Members as Ward Councillors, the role of the Executive and the role of Scrutiny. This led to questions on the current role of the Area Assemblies and the Chairmen of the Area Assemblies. The Panel noted the need for a local focus, but felt that if the Council were to review its governance arrangements, this might be a priority area to consider, including whether the Area Assembly functions could be delivered in a more cost effective way and if in these difficult times the number of Area Assemblies could be reduced and still give the same level of service.

The role of Cabinet Adviser was discussed, particularly as it appeared to be unique to Rotherham. It was noted that the advisers did not have the actual responsibility for taking decisions. The Panel felt that these posts might be regarded as opportunities to gain experience, rather than as remunerated positions.

The role of all Vice-Chairmen was reviewed. It was noted that the strong commitment of all Chairmen appeared to limit the activity of Vice-Chairmen. The Council were asked to consider if payments should continue to be paid to Vice-Chairmen or if a system should be introduced where Vice-Chairmen should only be paid an allowance linked to the number of meetings they chair.

It was noted that the Audit Committee comprised of just five Members, all of whom had a vital job to perform in overseeing the governance of financial and non-financial performance of the Council. The Council were asked to consider if the Council would be better served if allowances were paid to all members of the Audit Committee.

The Panel queried if there should be Independent Members (co-opted Members) of the Audit Committee to add expertise and experience to the Committee.

4. Travel and Subsistence

The Panel carried out a detailed examination of all travel and subsistence outside of the Borough.

The Panel welcomed the information that no first class rail travel had been undertaken in the past year, but did note that on occasions first class rail travel was cheaper than standard class.

It was noted that there was a small anomaly in that the allowance for absence from home or place of work up to 12 hours was £11.20. The deduction when meals were provided was £11.00 thus allowing the Member to claim 20 pence. As this 20 pence had never been claimed it was suggested that both figures be £11.00.

The Panel suggested that the wording of various sections of the scheme for travel and subsistence could be simplified.

It was noted that Council Officers now had a car mileage rate of 40p per mile, which was the HMRC recommendation and it was suggested that Councillors should have the same rate.

Information was provided that various income was taxable.

5. Co-Opted Members

The Panel reviewed the arrangements relating to the allowances and travel and subsistence arrangements for all Co-opted Members, particularly those on the Standards Committee.

These arrangements were considered to be generally satisfactory, but would benefit from a detailed review following the implementation of any proposals from the Localism Bill.

6. Finance

The Panel suggested that the Council consider the present downturn in the present economic climate and the political situation when making decision on the Members' Allowances Scheme. Reference was made to the impact of the poor economic climate on many residents of Rotherham and also on Council employees and those of the Council's partners.

The Panel noted that if the overall cost base was frozen for two years this would equate to a significant drop in member allowance after allowing for inflation.

The Panel felt the Council may wish to consider the economic situation when reviewing allowances.

7. Summary of Findings

THE PANEL RECOMMENDED THAT:-

1. THAT THE CURRENT BASIC ALLOWANCE OF £12,271 BE RETAINED.
2. THAT THE COUNCIL BE ASKED TO CONSIDER MAKING SAVINGS TO SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES PAID, ESPECIALLY TO REFLECT THE PANEL'S VIEWS AS SET OUT IN THE REPORT.
3. THAT THE BASIC ALLOWANCE AND THE SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES AGREED BY THE COUNCIL BE NOT INCREASED FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS AND BE REVIEWED BY THIS PANEL BEFORE ANY CHANGES ARE PROPOSED.
4. THAT THE COUNCIL BE INVITED TO REVIEW ITS MEETING ARRANGEMENTS AND THE VARIOUS OPTIONS AVAILABLE WITH A VIEW TO INCREASING ATTENDANCE LEVELS AT MEETINGS.
5. THAT IN ORDER TO HARMONISE WITH COUNCIL EMPLOYEES THE CAR MILEAGE RATE FOR TRAVEL OUTSIDE OF THE BOROUGH BE 40P PER MILE.
6. THAT RAIL TRAVEL BE ALWAYS UNDERTAKEN IN THE MOST COST EFFECTIVE WAY.
7. THAT THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS RELATING TO CO-OPTED MEMBERS BE RETAINED.
8. THAT THE WORDING IN THE SCHEME BE SIMPLIFIED WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

**Mr. Alan Tolhurst,
Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel,
26th January, 2011.**